

THE HOUSING INITIATIVE

The Housing Initiative is an innovative program established by the City of San Jose in 1989 to encourage the production of high density housing near public transit facilities (see Housing Initiative map).

Objectives

By encouraging high density housing opportunities along San Jose's transit corridors, the Housing Initiative is intended to meet the following objectives:

- Produce housing opportunities for residents of all income levels.
- Encourage transit ridership as a viable alternative to driving.
- Support economic development by providing housing near job centers.
- Channel growth into areas that are already served by the necessary infrastructure and community services.
- Make more efficient use and reuse of land.
- Help preserve valuable open space and agricultural areas surrounding San Jose by encouraging housing development in already urbanized areas.

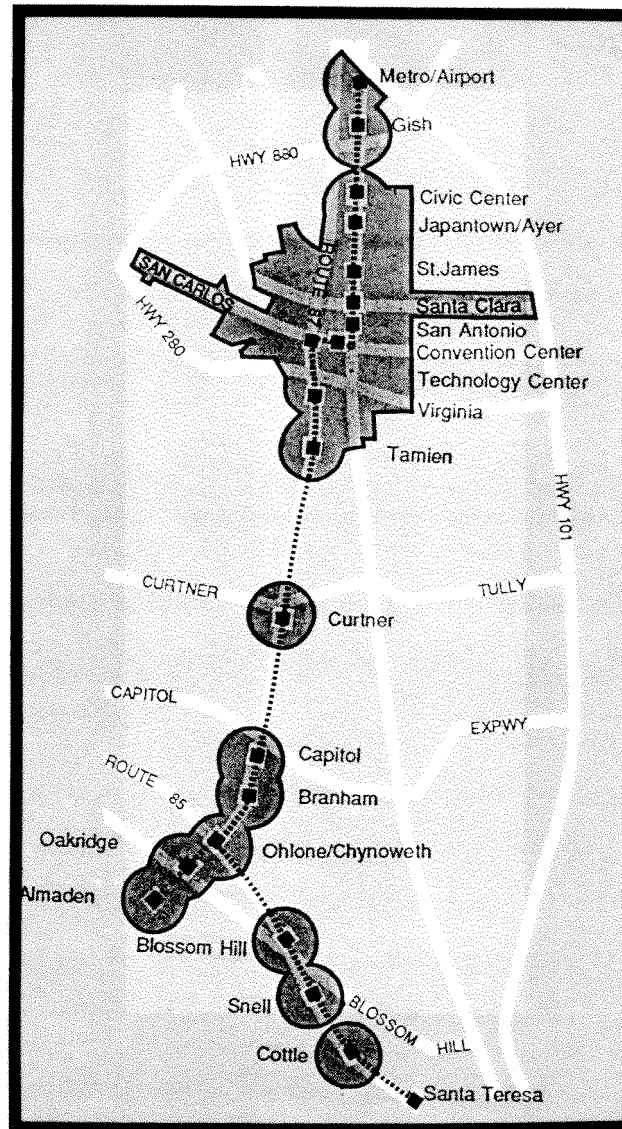
CONSULTANT STUDY

To begin the Housing Initiative program, City staff worked with consulting firms Bay Area Economics and Lyndon/Buchanan Associates to complete a three phase study of the potential for high density housing in the Guadalupe Corridor and Downtown study area.

Phase I: Land Use Evaluation identified vacant and underutilized sites within the study area which have potential for high density housing.

Phase II: Market Study reviewed case studies, demographic and economic data to determine the market demand for multifamily housing in San Jose.

HOUSING INITIATIVE STUDY AREA Guadalupe Corridor and Downtown



Phase III: Financial Feasibility Analysis tested four hypothetical high density housing prototypes, ranging in density from 18 to 70 units per acre.

Findings and Recommendations

The study concluded that San Jose has land within the study area to accommodate significant development of high density and mixed use projects on vacant and underutilized sites.

- The Study identified at least 386 acres which could yield up to 10,000 units above existing General Plan designations.
- A market demand of up to 9,400 high density housing units is projected for the next ten years within the study area.
- The financial feasibility of the high density housing prototypes depended upon land costs, construction costs, tenure, and other variables.

The Housing Initiative Study Final Report recommended specific actions the City can take to encourage the development of high density housing and supportive mixed uses in proximity to transit. These include amending the General Plan, completing master land use plans, promoting development incentives, studying parking requirements, and completing design guidelines.

IMPLEMENTING THE HOUSING INITIATIVE

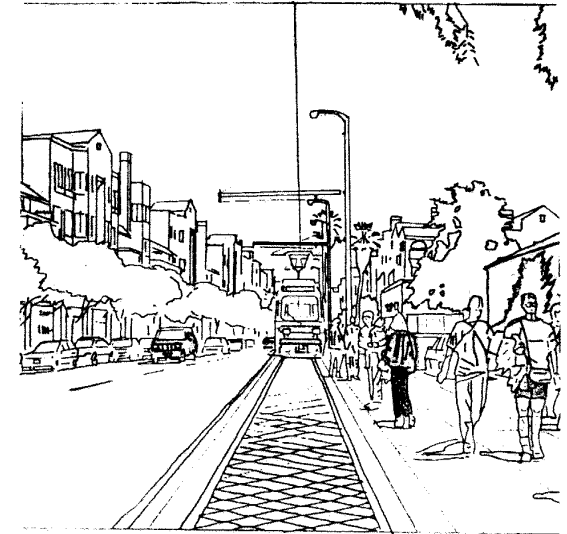
The Housing Initiative Study was completed in 1990 after extensive public review and was unanimously approved by the City Council in April of 1991. As a result of the Housing Initiative, the City has taken a variety of actions to implement the study's recommendations:

- The City Council adopted evaluation criteria to ensure that high density housing projects proposed near rail transit are compatible with surrounding existing and planned uses.

The Housing Initiative



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- A new General Plan land use designation, "Transit Corridor High Density Residential" (12+ dwelling units per acre [DU/AC]) was developed which can be applied to sites within 2,000 feet of light rail stations. Densities of at least 20 DU/AC are encouraged unless an existing low density neighborhood warrants a less intensive interface.
- The height limit for high density residential development located within 2,000 feet of a light rail station has been increased from 45 feet to 90 feet.
- The City completed detailed land use plans for strategic areas in close proximity to transit including the Jackson/Taylor and Midtown areas. These land use plans will create pedestrian and transit oriented communities with high density residential and supportive mixed-uses. A similar planning process will occur for the Tamien multimodal station area.
- To preserve the opportunity for future high density housing development at specific locations, the City Council approved General Plan amendments on nine sites in 1991 and four sites in 1992. These amendments create opportunities for the development of up to 2,200 new residential units.
- Since the Housing Initiative program began, the City Council has approved rezonings for high density housing near transit stations. These rezonings demonstrate the interest on the part of the development community to build high density housing near transit.

Together, these policy efforts will help provide new high density housing opportunities along transit corridors in San Jose, supporting the objectives of the Housing Initiative program.